

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

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1. A method of storing solar energy, said method comprising the steps of:
producing by photosyntheses an amount of biomass capable of forming charcoal;
converting said amount of biomass into charcoal;
extendedly storing of a predetermined substantial fraction of said charcoal; and
converting of a remaining portion of said charcoal into energy or an energy source with concomitant release into the air of a corresponding amount of CO₂;
whereby said corresponding amount of CO₂ released into the air during said step of converting of said remaining portion of charcoal into energy or an energy source being reduced as compared to the amount of CO₂ released into the air when the entire amount of said biomass is converted into energy or an energy source.
 2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said remaining portion of said charcoal is utilized for producing of hydrogen.
 3. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of extendedly storing of said remaining portion of said charcoal encompasses storing said remaining portion of said charcoal under an inert gas condition.

4. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said step of extendedly storing said remaining portion of said charcoal under an inert gas condition entails using CO₂ as said inert gas.

A)

5. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of extendedly storing said substantial fraction of said charcoal entails storing said substantial fraction of said charcoal in at least one subterraneous cavity.

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6. The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said step of extendedly storing said substantial fraction of said charcoal in at least one subterraneous cavity further comprises selecting said subterraneous cavity from a coal mine, an ore mine or a salt mine.

7. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of extendedly storing said substantial fraction of said charcoal entails storing said substantial fraction of said charcoal in an above-ground bunker facility.